

Statement

In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, during 2021. the Ministry of Environmental protection of the Republic of Serbia held several online public consultations on the Draft Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, Draft Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Draft Law on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The participants who were not able to participate online could participate in person

The public session of the Commission for Plans of the Assembly of the City of Belgrade for the Draft plan of detailed regulation of the part of Makisko field was held in December 2020. During the public session, all present natural and legal persons who submitted objections regarding the Draft Plan in writing could explain the objections before the Commission for Plans. Individuals and representatives of legal entities that submitted objections in writing during the public review could attend the public session and verbally explain them. In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic caused by COVID 19 at the public session of the Commission for Plans access is denied to a large number of gathered citizens who have acquired the condition to attend with the previous submission of comments to the Draft plan. When holding a public session, access is allowed to the public representatives who submitted comments and only to the one public representatives of each organization. The Law on Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment has established an obligation of organizing a public insight and public hearing in the process of approving the report on strategic Environmental impact assessment. Representatives of civil society organizations believe that only the minimum number of participants is not enough to implement the public hearing, but in the conditions of the pandemic, when thousands of citizens are prevented from participating in a public hearing, it cannot even maintain. The presence of a minimum number of representatives of civil society organizations is a violation of the concept of public debate and the principle of public participation and reduces them to the mere form.

On behalf of the Republic of Serbia,

Tina Janjatovic, national focal point for the Aarhus Convention